

B1  
1. (Amended) A plunger lift for a well producing through a production string communicating with a hydrocarbon formation, comprising a free piston having at least two sections, movable independently downwardly in the well, the sections comprising a ball and a sleeve providing a smooth rigid seating surface for receiving the ball so the ball and sleeve join together in the well for pushing liquid, above the piston, upwardly, the ball being freely movable into and out of the sleeve, the ball and sleeve being free of an assembly to resist movement of the ball out of the sleeve.

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4. (Amended) The plunger lift of claim 1 wherein the sleeve comprises an upper section having an upper end and an open lower end providing the smooth rigid seating surface, the seating surface comprising an annular hemispherical seating surface sized to receive the ball.

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11. (Twice Amended) A method of lifting liquids from a well producing hydrocarbons from a formation with a plunger lift having a multipart piston made of a material having a density less than about .25 pounds/cubic inch selected from the group consisting essentially of silicon nitride and titanium alloys having a tensile strength of at least 90,000 psi, comprising

placing a bumper assembly in the well adjacent the formation;

C moving ~~the~~ upper and lower sections together upwardly into the well head and capturing the upper section at a location adjacent the well head;

B3 dropping the lower section in the well, pausing for a time period and then, after the lower section is travelling downwardly in the well, releasing the upper section and allowing it to drop into the well;

uniting the upper and lower sections into a unit near the formation and moving the unit upwardly in the well in response to formation gases passing into the well and thereby pushing liquid upwardly with the piston.

<sup>12</sup>~~18~~. (Amended) A method of lifting liquids from a well producing hydrocarbons from a formation through a well head with a plunger lift having a multipart piston having at least one upper section and one lower section, movable independently downwardly in the well, the sections comprising a ball and a sleeve providing a seating surface for receiving the ball so the ball and sleeve join together in the well for pushing liquid, above the piston, upwardly, comprising

moving the upper and lower sections together upwardly and capturing the upper section at a location adjacent the well head;

dropping the lower section in the well, pausing for a time period and then, after the lower section is travelling downwardly in the well, releasing the upper section and allowing it to drop into the well;

uniting the upper and lower sections into a unit near the formation and moving the unit upwardly in the well in response to formation gases passing into the well and thereby pushing liquid upwardly with the piston.

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21. A method of lifting liquids from a well producing hydrocarbons from a formation through a well head with a plunger lift having a multipart piston having at least one upper section and one lower section, movable independently downwardly in the well, the sections comprising a ball and a sleeve providing a seating surface for receiving the ball so the ball and sleeve join together in the well for pushing liquid, above the piston, upwardly, comprising

moving the ball and sleeve upwardly together to a location adjacent the well head and pushing liquid upwardly through the well;

B5 separating the ball from the sleeve at a location adjacent the well head and thereby dropping the ball into the well and, after a time period and after the ball is travelling downwardly in the well, dropping the sleeve in the well; and

uniting the ball and sleeve into a unit near the formation and moving the unit upwardly in the well in response to formation gases passing into the well and thereby pushing liquid upwardly with the piston.

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<sup>15</sup>  
22. The method of claim ~~21~~ wherein the dropping steps occur when gas is flowing upwardly in the well.